WHIRRAKEE

September 2011 **Vol. 32 No. 8**

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552
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Office Bearers for 2010 - 2011

President	Jan Orr	5443 5668
Senior Vice President	Matthew Comer	0409 162627
Junior Vice President	*position vacant*	
Secretary	Anne Bridley	5442 6188
Minute Secretary	Joy Clusker/Rod Orr	
Treasurer	Ben Goonan	
Membership Officer	Anne Bridley	5442 6188
Excursion organiser	*position vacant*	
Syllabus organiser	Ben Goonan	
Librarian	Diana Collier (an assistant is still required)	5443 0137
Garden Convenor/Secretary	Matthew Comer	0409 162 627
Hall Management	Maurie Lewis (assisted by Rob Moors)	0407 427179
Whirrakee contact	Sabine Wilkens e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	5443 2797

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The meeting starts with a 10 minute thing-of-the night natural history segment. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Stuart Fraser, Glenise Moors, Joy Clusker, Bill Holsworth, Bev Culvenor, John Lindner, Kerrie Norris.

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one sub-group (the Fauna Study Group) and is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Fauna Study Group: meets occasionally (by prior arrangement) in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.

Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5442 6188 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5442 6188.
To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 32, No. 8, September 2011

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note: In September, activity in the local bush reaches fever pitch. There is colour everywhere as well as the chirping and squaking, buzzing and humming of all the various visitors to the flowers. It is such an uplifting experience that we get from nature, that it can be considered an 'ecosystem service'. It's also completely free! There is so much to do and see this month, that I had trouble putting even the essentials into the diary page.
Here is my appeal: please bring your uplifted spirits and good will to our Annual General Meeting this month and volunteer for a position, or perhaps for a spot on the committee, or simply as an assistant to someone else. In order to keep the Club going, we need to share the jobs around a bit more. Hope to see you all on Wednesday.

Front page photographer: Tamara Marwood and Joy Clusker

Tree planting must be a fun thing from what these two helpers are telling us. Hetty Waters (left) and Oliver Hall (right) were participating in the Family Nature Club activity at Crusoe Reservoir on Sunday 21st August.
Rod Orr said that in the short period of time available, a small band of people planted about 1000 trees, shrubs and grasses. There are more pictures on page 7. Thanks for the smiles and to all who helped.

Short Notices

A Thank You from The Northern Bendigo Landcare Group *for the occasion of the Annual General Meeting*

Thank you to the Bendigo Field Nats for their support during the past year. We greatly appreciate the assistance the following people have given to our Landcare Group:

* Anne Bridley and Kerrie Norris for leading us in bird surveys along the Bendigo Creek
* Lizzie Graham for helping us locate possible seed collection sites, sourcing donated paint to prepare nest boxes for our Bendigo Creek restoration project and attending a weeding working bee
* Matthew Comer for his expertise and advice in planning a species list for the recently installed Indigenous Demonstration Garden beside the Huntly General Store
* Ian Magee for his continued support, guidance and endless ability to keep us connected to people and places that can inform our work

We look forward to many more productive partnerships in the coming year.

Nicole Howie, Secretary
Northern Bendigo Landcare Group

New Name Badges

New name badges are now available for purchase from:

Bendigo Graphics, 176 Lyttleton Terrace

The new design features the club name and a coloured illustration of a sprig of Fairy Waxflower, *Philotheca verrucosa,* the club emblem. Your name will be clearly written in large print.

Members have a choice of finish to the badge;

Plain @ $11:00
or Domed @ $16:50

The club has had name badges for many years but, alas, most of us seem to have got out of the habit of wearing them to meetings. This must make things more difficult than it should be for new members, as they get to know us.

So, old members (most of us can truthfully be described as 'old') please find your old badge (if you can) or save up and get a 'snazzy' new one. And new members don't be left out, Bendigo Graphics is easy to find. It's next to the gun shop in the same row of shops as Autobarn in Lyttleton Terrace.

Water Bugs with the Family Nature Club and NCCMA

Date: Sunday 18 September 2011 10am - 11am

Venue: No.7 Reservoir, turn right at Harvey Norman (heading towards Melbourne) and take the first left into Granter Street, follow the road straight into the park - there are car parks available at this site and toilets. The frog pond is close to the car park

Booking is essential at:
Bendigonatureclub@gmail.com or 5443 1326

Water bugs are very important creatures that live in our rivers, creeks and even urban lakes. They are small and have no backbone. Water bugs have different features; some have scoops under their mouths to capture their prey, whilst others live in sticks and some swim upside down for their whole life!

This event is for families. It is free, fun and promises to be memorably muddy!

Emailing *Whirrakee* to members

The committee has decided to trial the e-mailing of *Whirrakee* to members as a PDF. This will have the advantage of reducing costs and paper use.

If you wish to receive your *Whirrakee* as an e-mail, please send your e-mail address to Anne Bridley at bridley@iinet.net.au.

N.B. Some unresolved questions will need sorting out, so there won't be a change for some time. At this stage, we just want to get a feel for the demand.

Peter Marriott's **Moths of Victoria - Volume 3** is now available

Mail orders to: Ian Endersby, 56 LookerRd, Montmorency 3094
vicmoth@entsocvic.org.au

August – Spring Riot of Peas and Wattles. Their flowers look very different indeed, but wattles and peas used to be in the same family, the Leguminosae. In order to see their relatedness, you need to look at their fruit – all have very similarly structured pods.

Acacia genistifolia had a fantastic flowering season. Rod Orr remembered that many years ago, one club member, Bob Allen, took it as a personal challenge to find specimens of this wattle flowering in every month of the year in the forests surrounding Bendigo, and he succeeded! Our Happy Wanderer, *Hardenbergia violacea* (right) and the Common Hovea, *Hovea heterophylla* (below) also seemed to be more numerous, more colourful and flowering longer than usual this year. Photographer: Rod Orr

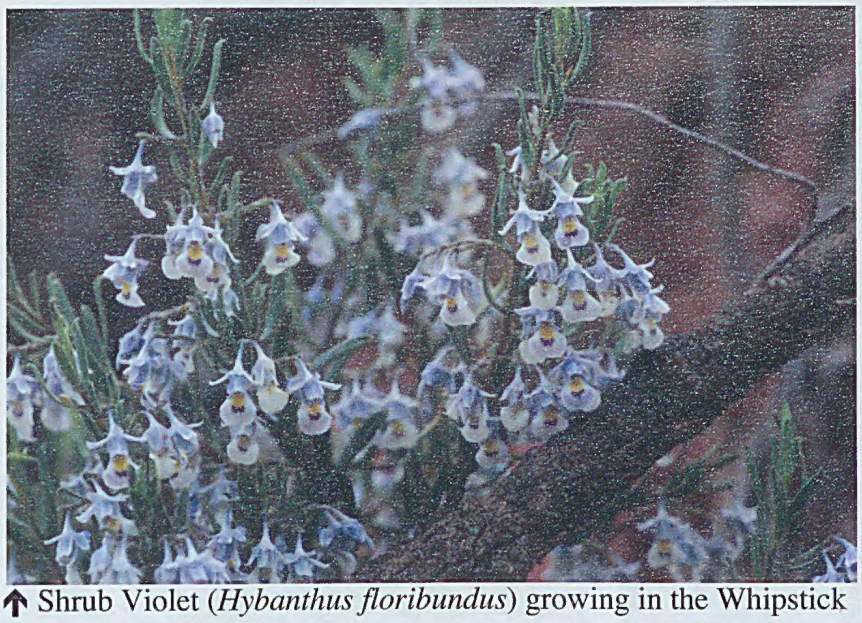
Gold dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*) growing in profusion along Guy's Hill Road – what a feast for the pollinators! Photographer Peter Ellis

Variations on the theme 'Waxflower'

Above is our Bendigo (or Fairy) Waxflower (*Philotheca verrucosa*) (can't you just feel the warmth of the spring sunshine on it?) and above, right, the much deeper pink form, growing in Kangaroo Gully (first discovered by Kerrie Norris) Photographer: Peter Ellis

Below is the second, less common species in our district, *Philotheca angustifolia*, the Narrow-leaf Waxflower. On the right is our local form, growing at Kamarooka, and on the left, the more spectacular Grampians form (from the Goulton Gorge area). Photographer: Rod Orr

Less commonly seen Spring Flowers

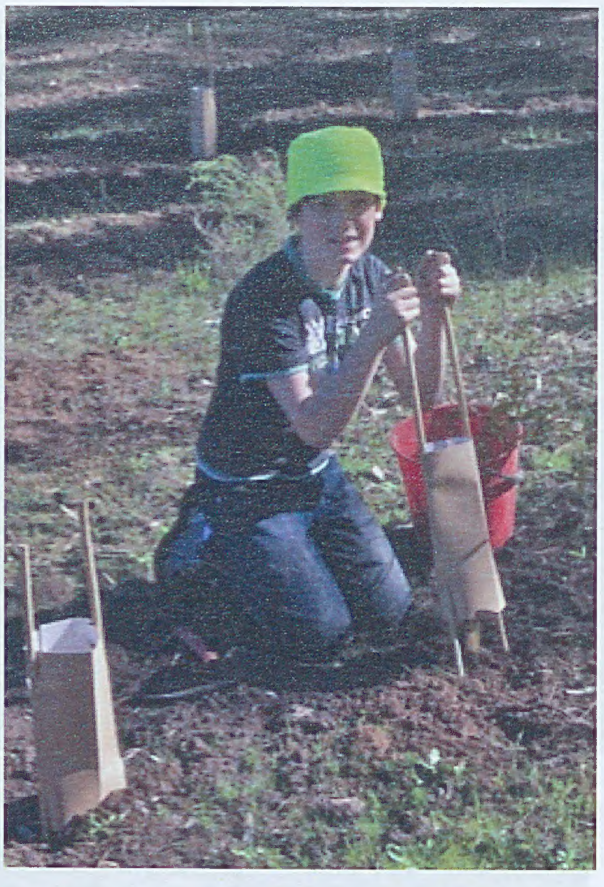


↑ Shrub Violet (*Hybanthus floribundus*) growing in the Whipstick
Photographer: Rod Orr

Dwarf Greenhood (*Pterostylis nana*) from Kangaroo Gully →
Photographer: Peter Ellis

←
Pseudanthus ovalifolius, a little twiggy plant that flowered in August in the Kamarooka forest. I thought the name suggested 'false anthers', but Rod took the close up (below) and this clearly shows that there is nothing false about them.
The word 'anthus' does, in fact, refer to 'flower'. Apparently Sieber, who named it, thought there was something fishy going on with the flowers. Listed as 'rare' in Victoria. Photographer: Rod Orr

Family Nature Club Tree Planting at Crusoe Reservoir



More happy helpers. Photographers: Rod Orr (left) and Joy Clusker (right)
But no matter what they are occupied with, and while transforming an area for the better (below), the children's sharp eyes always spot other things too…
Like an Eastern Banjo Frog ↓

A busy morning at Crusoe Reservoir →
with approx. 1000 plants in the ground by noon. (both photos by Joy Clusker)

August Observations

Compiled by Rod Orr

Rod Fyffe - 2 Ground Cuckoo-shrikes visited his garden in town on 17th July.

Bill Holsworth - observed a Currawong at Kennington Reservoir being attacked by Noisy Miners.

Kerrie Norris - Regent Honeyeater at Lurg - seen during the revegetation working bee. First sightings were reported this year in revegetated areas after 16 years of the revegetation program. Grey-crowned Babblers were also nesting in the revegetated area - first recordings!

Joy Clusker - 2 Peregrine Falcons have been seen regularly at Strathfieldsaye during the last 6 weeks.

Jan Orr: July is a good time to make discoveries. On July 29th, Rod and I went to the Kamarooka section of the Greater Bendigo National Park to find the answer to a botany puzzle that arose out of our recent visit to the Grampians, where we found an interesting Waxflower in the Northern Grampians, off Copper-mine Track. We were looking for orchids and noticed what looked like a Waxflower growing high on a rocky ledge above the path. It was in full flower with flowers about the same size as our common Waxflower but on closer inspection, after a fair bit of rock scrambling, Rod thought it was probably a Grampians form of the Small-leaved Waxflower, but he needed to compare it with the local form of the plant that grows in the Kamarooka. Hence our excursion on the 29th. The Small-leaved Waxflower was mostly still in bud but there were enough early flowers for Rod to answer his questions and decide that the 2 plants were the same species, (see page 5 for the comparison)

Once the botany questions were resolved we drove west along Campbells Rd to the old gravel scrape and before we even stopped the car we could hear the most amazing bird song. We had 'surround sound' and restless movement from dozens of honeyeaters. The principal species were White-fronted and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters. They were so dominant that it was only after some time that I found one New Holland Honeyeater (it didn't hang around). Later I noticed Eastern Spinebill, Purple-gaped, White-eared, and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters were also present and I heard Brown-headed Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds calling from the Yellow-gums growing (flowering) in the nearby gully. We also noticed that the Yellow-spotted Pardalotes had a nesting hollow in the bank beside the road.

Anne Bridley - Spectacular displays of Golden Wattle were seen in the Northern block of the Wellsford Forest (August 7th), *Pterostylis nana* and *Pterostylis robusta* were also flowering. Red-capped and Scarlet Robins were seen near Popes Rd, Longlea.

Some additional observations…

Glenise Moors

One observation I didn't report at the meeting was that on 17/7/11. As we returned home after the geology family nature club excursion we stopped to check for robins near a dam and saw an Australian Raven carrying an egg in its bill. It landed amongst the weeds and reeds, placed the egg on the ground then used its bill to push leaves and dead grass over it. I suppose it was stashing it for later on, as the raven then flew away.

Later the same day(17/7/11)I noticed that the gardens in front of our house had been thoroughly turned over by quail. The area was now a pattern of little "dishes", which are made as they scratch outwards as they turn around and peck at the soil at the edges. I moved away and waited. There were four Painted Button-quail hiding under a shrub. They eventually came out to feed and one brave female even came into the open where I could watch her take many clockwise feeding turns and only a part circle in the opposite direction. I had only seen these quail going clockwise in the past.

In mid-June, Rob and I had flushed a quail from the long grass while checking for robins in the granitic section of the Big Hill range. Two weeks later I found a Brown Quail squashed on the track in the same area. This is the first time we have recorded quail on the "robin site".
On 29/7/11 I recorded another new species on the same hill. I was surprised to see a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater perch on the top of a dead tree. I haven't seen this honeyeater in the Sedgwick area before.
On 6/8/11 there was a lovely male Red-capped Robin feeding from a fence. This was also in an exposed area on top of the range.

Jennifer Coopersmith
Jennifer found a dead (banded) parrot at the university in July. This was quite exciting for me and my Ecology students, because at first it looked like and Orange-bellied Parrot. However, Bill Holsworth determined it to be a Scarlet Bourke's Parrot that had escaped from captivity.

August general meeting – Speaker: Sam Lake: 'stream restoration'

Our waterways are not well. Rivers have been dammed and diverted by unwise catchment development, riparian zones have been fragmented, modified and depleted, floodplains have been cleared, drained, cropped, grazed and built-on and have often been divorced altogether from the rivers that feed them.

Sam Lake is very concerned about this. He is an Emeritus Professor at Monash University, and even though he is 'retired', he is still fully involved with research in stream ecology and stream restoration.

Restoration ecology is the study of ecological processes that govern and influence the course of restoration, and steam restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of a degraded, damaged or destroyed stream ecosystem. Such restoration will not necessarily bring the stream back to its original condition (very often we don't actually know what exactly this was anyway), but it will restore ecological functioning, and if successful, will give the stream environment some resistance and resilience to further and continuous natural or anthropogenic disturbances. In other words, restoration will bring sustainability to the system, a situation in which biodiversity and ecological processes can be sustained in the face of external pressures.
The idea is to go from a degraded system with low diversity, low complexity and low productivity, to one in which all those measurable charcteristics have increased in value.

Of course, a stream cannot be restored without the adjacent riparian zone and the contributing catchment also being 'addressed', so it is a huge and very long-term undertaking. Sam mentioned our tendency these days to make and expect processes to become more efficient and faster - all the time (a condition he called 'short-termism'). However, many aspects of stream restoration cannot be sped up because the relevant biological processes cannot be made more efficient by our clever planning or resource management.

Looking at funding for stream restoration, a lot of money is actually spent. In a snapshot across Victoria in the years 1999-2001, there were 2630 stream restoration projects underway, which cost more than 64 million dollars. These projects were in the areas of riparian restoration (about 50%), bank stabilization (20%), habitat enhancement (<15%) and channel restoration (<15%). Of these projects, however, only 6% were monitored in any way.

Lack of monitoring is doubly bad. Firstly nobody knows if the money was actually well spent, and secondly (and more importantly), no learning can come of it. Since stream restoration and stream ecology knowledge mainly comes from empirical observations, progress is limited anyway, but advancement depends heavily on monitoring. Other factors

that impede progress in this field are poor planning, poor project design, lack of information or poor choice on indicators, lack of reporting (sharing) of results, as well as lack of long-term commitment.

A project requires the following steps to have a chance of success:

- assessment of the damage site
- Identification of the disturbance(s)
- Setting of goals/targets and hypothesis
- Selection of indicators
- Achieving goal (this step requiring patience to let the various processes 'do their thing'

In addition to the difficulty of finding good indicators, that let you know along the way that you are heading in the right direction, and finding the resources to monitor them, it is very difficult to find a reference site that will give you a goal to work towards.

Sam Lake and a large team of researchers have studied and worked on restoring several creek systems in Victoria. Very often, the most important measures are excluding of sheep and replanting (although often natural recruitment does an excellent job as well). His team has monitored various environmental characteristics and processes over various times to get an idea on the time frames they require to change. Some of these processes are soil development, geomorphological changes, water quality, vegetation, litter and organic matter, as well as habitat structure and fauna.

Sometimes the odds are stacked against success. Being in a non-controlled environment, natural occurrences like droughts can slow down or destroy years of restoration effort, politics or a change of property ownership can also cause set-backs.
Still...the scientists, Landcare groups and government departments plan/spend/work/move on, albeit not all necessarily playing to the same tune.
If there was a final plea in this presentation, it was to replace learning about stream restoration by trial and error, with learning by doing, followed by monitoring. This requires long-term commitment, which runs counter to the 'short-termism', which dictates so much of our lives.

Professor Lake has had a life-long career in stream restoration, and our club was very lucky indeed, to hear from somebody so experienced and so willing to share his passion as well as some secrets of the workings of stream ecology.

...and while talking about stream restoration...

Bendigo Creek Community Field Day

To celebrate Landcare Week and the value of Bendigo Creek, an often misunderstood water way, everyone is invited to a field day on Sunday 11th September. Commencing at 9:30 at Leans Road Huntly, participants will enjoy a day of talks, walks and hands-on activities designed to raise awareness of the Bendigo Creek and contribute to restoration works.

Full details of the day were in the August *Whirrakee* (page 3). Please contact Nicole Howie 5448 8244 / dnhowie@bigpond.com for further information.

BFNC Christmas Break up

For the December general meeting, we usually share a meal, to which everyone is welcome to contribute something (hence the earlier starting time). The theme of the night is "A Wander Down Memory Lane"
Members are invited to bring memorabilia for display such as photos, newspaper clippings, specimens and interesting artifacts. Members can also bring a few slides (a maximum of 10 per member). You are invited to give a brief talk (no more than 10 minutes) about your items and stories of club doings. Past members are also welcome, so if you know of any who would like to come, please invite them.

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday, September 14 7.30pm
Ass. Prof. Raoul Mulder, Dept of Zoology, Uni of Melbourne: 'The My Swan project'

Wednesday, October 12 7.30pm
Carolyn Hall, 'A Touch Of Ice - Spitsbergen & Greenland 2010'.

Wednesday, November 9 7.30pm
Jeff Jeanes, National Herbarium. 'The Victorian Conservation Seedbank Project'

Wednesday, December 12 6.30pm
We usually share a meal. The theme for our XMAS breakup is "A Wander Down Memory Lane" see page 10 for details.

'Naturally Loddon' A Wonderland in Spring Festival 1 September to 2 October
Program includes photography exhibitions, walks, tours of wetlands and environmental iconic sites.
Highlights: **Kooyoora Wildflower Show**
Saturday 17 to Sunday 17 Sept., Rheola Hall
Friends of Terrick Terrick Open Weekend
Friday 30 September to Sunday 2 October
For brochure or further infomation: www.loddon.vic.gov.au or ph 54954 3489

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

SEANA Spring Camp at Philip Island – Sat Oct. 29 - Tues. Nov. 1.
For details, please contact Anne Bridley.

ANGAIR Wildflower & Art Show
Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sep
Memorial Hall, 3 McMillan St Anglesea
Native & indigenous flowers, orchids, plant & arts & crafts for sale, local
art, guided wildflower walks & bus tours included in entry fee.
Enquiries: Chris Morrissey 9853 9269 or 5263 3131, www.angair.org.au

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Ringwood Field Naturalists Club 50th Birthday Luncheon
Sunday 25th September 11:30 to noon for 12:30 lunch. Karralyka Centre, Mines Rd, Ringwood. Cost $35 per head RSVP: by 9 September. Contact: Peter or Alllison Roger, ph 9801 6946.

Regent Honeyeater Project – last 2011 planting weekend Saturday and Sunday, 17 & 18 September in the Benalla area. Please contact Ray Thomas, if interested.
<raydavidthomas@hotmail.com> 5761 1515
http://www.regent.org.au

You, Me and Biodiversity Lecture: Wombat Forestcare presents: Orchids - the hidden forest beauty
1.30 - 3.30pm Saturday, 10 September 2001
Daylesford Neighbourhood House, 13 Camp St, Daylesford.
Cathy Powers will introduce the great variety of native orchid species, their wonderful colours and their adaptations to attract pollinators. Cathy is President of the Australian Plants Society Victoria, a member of the Friends of the Brisbane Ranges and a member of the Australasian Native Orchid Society. Cost: $10 attendance fee.
Bookings 5348 3569 or Gayle Osborne <gayle.osborne@bigpond.com>
http://www.wombatforestcare.org.au

Grampians Wildflower Show
9.30am - 430pm Thursday to Sunday, 29 Sept to 2 Oct Centenary Hall, Grampians Rd, Halls Gap

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